



## BACKGROUND

In 1982, USAID became one of the first donors to articulate a policy that addressed women in development. Since 1982, USAID has refined that policy by providing guidelines for addressing gender issues. USAID's gender mainstreaming approach begins with a gender analysis that is applied to the range of technical issues in the Strategic Plan. Two fundamental questions form the framework of a gender analysis:

- How will gender relations affect the sustainability of results?
- How will the (proposed) results affect the relative status of men and women?

Gender roles and disparities affect the management and sustainability of activities in every sector. For this reason, gender is identified as a cross-cutting theme in USAID/Cambodia's strategy.

USAID/Cambodia's strategy recognizes that gender equality is not just a women's issue. Gender equality is essentially a fundamental human rights issue that affects an entire society. Problems such as gender-based violence, low enrollment of girls in secondary school and high health risks for women are reflections of gender disparity in the current Cambodian environment. Addressing such issues goes beyond sector specific programs. Activities in health, education and governance can be linked to support probable associations so that gender sensitive interventions complement each other.

For example, the Democracy and Governance division's human rights programs emphasize strategies to combat gender-based human rights abuses such as domestic violence, rape, and trafficking. At the same time, the Health office supports behavior change activities that reduce health risks for women who might be victims of gender-based violence. USAID/Cambodia's education program supports the inclusion of gender sensitivity linked to behavior change in life skills curriculum for both male and female students and teachers.

With USAID/Cambodia's support to mainstreaming gender, partners can build more cohesive and efficient activities that promote both sustainability and gender equality.

### "Key Concepts and terms"

In development concepts, '*gender*' and '*sex*' are used as distinctly separate terms. '*Gender*' points to economic, social, political and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female while '*sex*' refers to the physical and biological differences that define males and females. Gender is determined by tasks, functions and roles that are ascribed to men and women in private and public social life.

*Gender-blindness* is a failure to recognize gender differences in both social roles and potential impact. In failing to recognize the differences, gender-blindness assumes gender is not a factor and so does not incorporate gender sensitivity into strategies and actions.

*Gender sensitive approach* acknowledges and highlights existing gender differences, issues and inequalities, and incorporates these into strategies and actions.

*Gender Analysis* assesses the differences between men's and women's activities by looking at roles and responsibilities, access to and control over resources, and political voice. Gender analysis is a step in identifying men's and women's practical and strategic needs along with the constraints and opportunities in addressing those needs. Gender analysis also takes into account differences of ethnicity, class, education, religion, age, livelihood, and other diversity issues.

*Gender equality* is more about equal opportunity than equal numbers or identical treatment. The intent of gender equality is that men and women are equally able to contribute and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political development in their society. World Bank calls attention to three dimensions of gender equality: "equality under the law, equality of opportunity... and equality of voice."

#### **Processes that move towards the goal of gender equality:**

- *Gender Integration* involves addressing gender issues during program or activity design.
- *Gender Mainstreaming* incorporates gender dimensions at all levels, including policy, planning, evaluation, budgeting and decision-making procedures. Mainstreaming addresses institutional arrangements and ensures that gender issues are not to be treated separately from other development issues.